



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## NEWS RELEASE

SNAKE RIVER BASIN OFFICE

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### **PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR COMMENT ON PROPOSED LISTING OF SLICKSPOT PEPPERGRASS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will hold public hearings to receive comments on the proposed listing of a rare southwestern Idaho plant, slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*). The Service published a proposed rule to list the plant as endangered under the Endangered Species Act on July 15, 2002.

This small, rare plant occurs in sagebrush-steppe habitats in southwestern Idaho, including the Snake River Plain, Owyhee Plateau and adjacent foothills in southwestern Idaho. Biologists have documented 70 occurrences of slickspot peppergrass in Ada, Canyon, Gem, Elmore, Payette and Owyhee counties but only six of these areas are considered to be of high quality. The species is no longer found in 18 other historic occurrences. Remaining suitable habitat to support this species is less than 12,400 acres. All remaining populations of the slickspot peppergrass are potentially vulnerable to naturally occurring events, such as wildfire, introduction of exotic species, development and other human activities.

Hearings will be held at two locations in Idaho in August. The first hearing will be in Grand View, Idaho, on August 28 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Grand View Elementary School gymnasium, 205 First Street. Two hearings will be held in Boise on August 29, 2002 from 1-3 p.m., and from 6-8 p.m. at the AmeriTel Spectrum, 7499 W. Overland Road. Formal testimony will be heard and recorded at the public hearings. Anyone wishing to make oral comments for the record is encouraged to provide written copy of their statement and present it at the hearing. In the event there is a large attendance, the time allotted for oral statements may be limited. Oral and written comments will receive equal consideration.

In addition to delivering testimony at the hearings, the public may submit comments and materials by one of several other methods. Comments may be submitted by mail or hand-delivered to the supervisor, Snake River Basin Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709. Facsimile comments will be received at (208) 378-5262; comments must contain the subject line "Lepidium Comments." Electronic submission of comments are to be directed to [FW1SRBOComment@fws.gov](mailto:FW1SRBOComment@fws.gov). The subject line must state "Lepidium Comments." Comments from interested parties must be received by September 13, 2002.

For more information, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, Jeri Wood of the Snake River Basin Office at 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709, (208) 378-5243.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses nearly 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas.

It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.